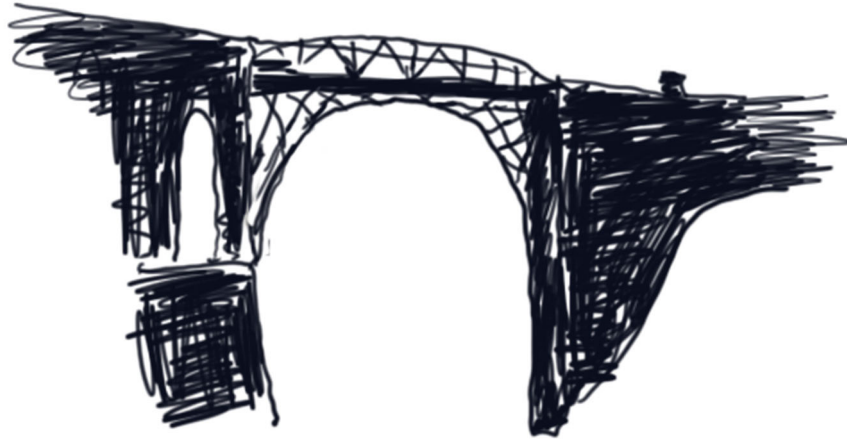


**Press Release**  
**Robert Jordan Doesn't Teach English**



July 13, 2021 For Immediate Release

The National Theatre Symphony in Brasilia releases recording of a scene from a new opera for Ernest Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls".

Contact: Brian Wilbur Grundstrom [www.brianwilbur.com](http://www.brianwilbur.com) 917-952-7957 [brian@brianwilbur.com](mailto:brian@brianwilbur.com)

<https://vimeo.com/brianwilbur/robertjordanteaser>

On Tuesday July 20th, 7pm Eastern Daylight Time (8pm in Brasilia), the Orquestra Sinfônica do Teatro Nacional Claudio Santoro (OSTNCS), the resident orchestra for the National Theatre in Brasilia, Brazil will release a new recording. As an international collaboration funded by the DC Commission on the Arts with its Sister Cities Program, the orchestra has recorded a scene from a new opera for Ernest Hemingway's "For Whom the Bell Tolls". The orchestra led by Maestro Cláudio Cohen joins creative forces from Washington DC area, including nine opera singers, in performing the scene "Robert Jordan Doesn't Teach English". Written by DC composer Brian Wilbur Grundstrom, the popular novel is set during the Spanish Civil War, has a libretto by David M Dorsen, and music direction by Jeffrey Sean Dokken.

Also included in the concert is an interview hosted by Christina Scheppelmann, General Director of the Seattle Opera, and OSTNCS' 2016 premiere performance of Grundstrom's "Contentment, Poem for Orchestra".

Hemingway was a larger-than-life personality. In his popular novel, For Whom the Bell Tolls, he sees himself in the character of Robert Jordan, an idealistic young American in 1930's fascist Spain, who accepts a doomed mission to blow up a bridge.

Through his lyrical melody-driven music, Brian Grundstrom brings out the emotional depths of the characters and brings new insight to this Hemingway classic. Using the full versatility of opera,

Dorsen's libretto and Grundstrom's music are able not only to explore Hemingway's themes of trust, loyalty, honor, love betrayal, fear pain, loss, and sacrifice, but add modern insight into the toxic nature of Jordan's (Hemingway's) masculinity, as his notions of honor clash with the reality of the situation.

For Whom the Bell Tolls is set in the 1930s during the Spanish Civil War. In this early scene, the American Robert Jordan, who has travelled to Spain to fight against the fascists, is meeting a band of Guerrilla fighters for the first time. The leader of the band, Pablo, whose leadership is threatened by his wife Pilar, mocks Robert Jordan by attempting to undermine his credibility. Pablo questions Robert Jordan authenticity by insisting that he could not possibly be the American professor he says he is if he does not even have a beard. This introduces Pablo as the weak and flawed traitor he will become, only caring about his own personal safety. We also see Pilar emerging as the de facto leader, as the other men in the band side with her in her decision to help Robert Jordan blow up the bridge. In this tragic war-time story, with so much suffering, sacrifice and betrayal, this humorous scene allows for a much-needed moment of levity.

A teaser for the concert can be viewed at: <https://vimeo.com/brianwilbur/robertjordanteaser>.

More information is available at [www.brianwilbur.com](http://www.brianwilbur.com), including the scene which immediately follows in the opera, "Maria Meets Robert Jordan".

**For Whom the Bell Tolls**

A New Opera in Two Acts

Brian Wilbur Grundstrom, Composer

David M Dorsen, Libretto

Ernest Hemingway, Story

Jeffrey Sean Dokken, Music Director

Scene: "**Robert Jordan Doesn't Teach English**"

Full video released on Tuesday July 20, 2021, 7pm EST

Brazil's National Theatre Orchestra:

Orquestra Sinfônica do Teatro Nacional Claudio Santoro

Maestro Cláudio Cohen

On the orchestra's YouTube Channel: [youtube.com/orquestrasinfonicatncs](https://youtube.com/orquestrasinfonicatncs)

with interview hosted by Christina Scheppelmann, General Director Seattle Opera

Featuring:

Alan Naylor (Robert Jordan)

Eliza Bonet (Pilar)

Malte Roesner (Pablo)

Aurelio Dominguez (Rafael)

Lori Sen (Amalia)

Jose Sacin (Anselmo)

Antony Zwerdling (Agustin)

Gustavo Ahualli (Primitivo)

This project was supported by the DC Commission on the Arts & Humanities.

Also to be shown:

OSTNCS' 2016 world premiere of Grundstrom's "Contentment, Poem for Orchestra"

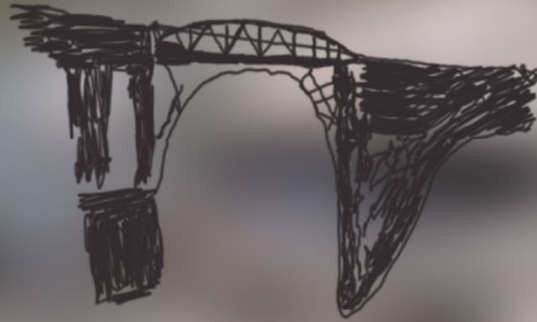


Brian Wilbur Grundstrom, Composer

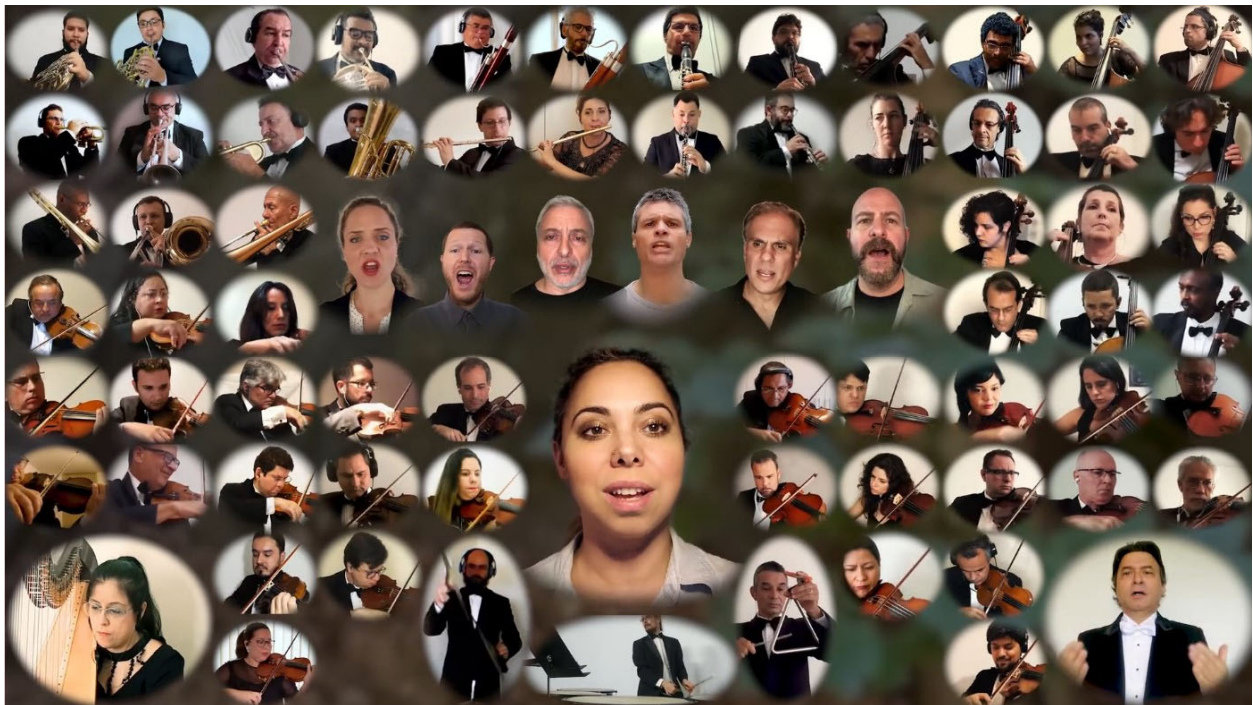




# *For Whom the Bell Tolls*



*A New Opera in Two Acts*



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**Brian Wilbur Grundstrom** [www.brianwilbur.com](http://www.brianwilbur.com) **Composer**